

That is why Republicans at the Education and Labor Committee have been fighting so hard to keep schools open. We know the stakes are high.

This pandemic has made it abundantly clear that teachers' unions, as well as the education establishment, have too much power. Neither union bosses nor bureaucrats in Washington should be able to keep our children from the classroom. Access to education is an important right in this country, one that teachers' unions are belittling with their outrageous demands.

What has the outsized influence of teachers' unions produced? Less school choice, falling education standards, explicit material in school libraries, critical race theory-inspired curriculum, and years of learning loss.

Teachers' unions have become far less about protecting teachers or students and far more about promoting a left-wing political agenda. This was made clear when the teachers' unions in several major cities joined forces with the Democratic Socialists of America to demand an eviction moratorium and an end to voucher programs as conditions for reopening schools.

The longer we let these union bosses take advantage of this pandemic, the worse off our students will be. Students should no longer take a back seat to politics or special interests.

It is time to stop catering to teachers' unions and to start serving the needs of students.

RECOGNIZING EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the resilient, dedicated, and understandably exhausted, yet unflagging, educators and school staff across the Nation.

I have spent my career advocating for an equitable education system, and I am a proud dad of four children who are products of Michigan public schools. In fact, my daughter Molly is currently a high school junior who is set to graduate next year. I can hardly believe it.

That is why I have been especially disheartened when I meet regularly with educators and superintendents in Macomb and Oakland Counties and hear stories of how these frontline workers navigate from one crisis to another, seemingly without end. From multiple COVID-19 waves and politicization of commonsense public health measures, like masking and vaccines, to mass shootings, like the Oxford High School tragedy in my home county of Oakland County that we are still mourning, and startling learning loss and social delays.

Mr. Speaker, our educators, school staff, and administrators are not catching a break. They are working tirelessly and meeting daily, even over hol-

iday breaks, to make sure they can provide the best learning environment for our students. Across the board, they reported trouble finding teachers, finding bus drivers, finding kitchen staff and everything in between.

Our students are returning to the classroom with immense needs in the midst of a teacher and substitute shortage. All manner of staff and administrators, including even superintendents themselves, are stepping up and entering the classroom as substitutes.

One thing is very clear: We need a societal shift to address the issues around staffing, attendance, learning loss, and the social and mental health needs of our students. As the omicron variant continues to surge, we must prioritize education and consider it a sacred public good instead of an industry, and value our educators and school staff by providing living wages, safe work environments, and ending the attacks on educators and their unions.

The pandemic has exposed long-simmering problems, as crises are wont to do. It is a time for a fundamental reset; time for us to realize that, while markets do a great job of distributing goods and services across the society, there are a few social goods that should not be determined by market forces but, rather, lifted up above them as a way to protect our democracy and make the healthy functioning of markets possible in the first place.

One is public safety. Another is access to quality healthcare for every person. A third is an excellent public education for every child, from preschool to community college.

We cannot continue to put our educators through the wringer. Longtime professionals in my district tell me they are hearing from new teachers who say they won't last a couple of years, much less decades.

My response was this: We must restore the education profession; the dignity of the education profession; the worth and the standing of the education profession, no matter how difficult it is. We must train teachers and prepare them for success, offer them appropriate pay and benefits, and support them, not only in the classroom, but in our society with the dignity and respect they deserve.

As a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, I urge my colleagues to join me in continuing the fight for robust investments and just policies to make sure our country, our economy, and our education system work for every American, not just the wealthy few.

THE DRUG CRISIS IS DECIMATING COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the drug cri-

sis that is decimating communities and destroying families.

Earlier this month, the CDC released data showing that fentanyl overdoses are now the number one killer of Americans ages 18 to 45: number one killer. This data is tragic. No family should have to deal with the sudden loss of a loved one.

Fentanyl is often ingested unknowingly, and a dose smaller than the size of a penny can be lethal.

In 2021, President Biden swung open the doors to our southern border, and the impact of that continues to be negative. That decision invited drug traffickers into our country. Last year, Border Patrol agents seized enough fentanyl to kill every man, woman and child in my home State of Pennsylvania.

We cannot solve this crisis while our borders remain open. We cannot solve this crisis while the Biden administration fails to act.

This deadly drug will continue to pour into our country if we fail to build the wall. It will continue to pour into our country if we do not get the border agents the support and the tools that they need.

This issue is far too important to continue to ignore. Our communities continue to suffer. Congress should act now to make fentanyl analogs a schedule one narcotic.

The Biden administration must secure our southern border. Our communities, they are counting on us to act. We can no longer continue to let them down.

SCHOOLS NEED CRITICAL INVESTMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the critical investments we are making in our schools. Schools are the pillars of our communities. They are the places where our children learn and grow every day. Making sure that these spaces are safe for our Nation's children is one of our most important responsibilities.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, many of these facilities are not up to the task. School boards have been sounding the alarm for years about lead pipes, poor air quality, and now COVID-19 issues hurting our children's education. And for too long, help has not come.

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But this month, during School Board Recognition Month, I am proud to be able to tell schools in my district and around the country that help is on the way.

Thanks to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed by this Chamber, we are bringing billions of dollars to make safe, healthy schools for our kids. That means billions of dollars to remove dangerous lead pipes

from schools; millions of dollars to buy masks and protective equipment for teachers, staff, and students; and millions of rapid, accurate COVID tests so everyone can get tested and stay safe.

We are also investing billions to improve air quality in schools across America.

The impact of these investments cannot be overstated. We all know how dangerous lead contamination is for our kids. Lead poisoning can cause developmental problems, mental and physical health issues, and even death. No child should be poisoned by their own school water fountain—not in Texas, not in America, not anywhere. That is why this law is investing \$2.9 billion to replace lead pipes in Texas schools and make sure our children have clean, safe drinking water.

It is for those same reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we are also putting tax dollars to work for cleaner air in schools. Poor air quality hurts students every day, making it harder to learn and contributing to illnesses like asthma.

Recently, poor air circulation and filters have been driving up COVID-19 cases in schools. We can keep our kids safe in their schools by installing better filters that clean out the COVID virus before it travels between classrooms; we can keep our kids safe by providing them and their teachers with masks to help stop the spread; and we can keep our kids safe by making sure that if anyone does feel sick, they can immediately get a free COVID test.

There are over 193,000 schoolchildren in my district. I am proud that the investments we are making will help each and every one of them. These are important measures we are taking right now to make schools safe and a great place to learn and grow for our students, for the teachers, the bus drivers, the cafeteria workers, and all those that keep our schools open and safe.

Houston ISD alone has over 29,000 employees working hard every day for our kids. They have been on the front lines of this pandemic, helping our children stay on track, even as this disease has disrupted almost everything in their lives. It is absolutely vital that we bring these important tools for safe schools to them as well. Making sure that our educators and staff have rapid tests, masks, and vaccines will keep everyone in schools stay safe and healthy.

But we must also finish the job and build back better, which will include billions for universal pre-K, which boosts our education system, and reinstate the child tax credit, which will lift children out of poverty.

I am proud of the work of this Congress, and I am proud of the critical investments to my district, in our schools, in Texas, and across the country.

We have made incredible progress this past year to help our educators, our students, and our communities

bounce back from COVID-19. I am thankful for the hard work of President Biden and my colleagues in the House and the Senate. Thanks to our collective efforts, students, teachers, and faculty will have safe schools, clean water, and a brighter future.

CONGRATULATING MALCOLM MEYER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man, a devoted father and husband, a selfless leader, and a legend in Louisiana real estate law.

Malcolm Meyer graduated magna cum laude from Tulane University, graduated from Tulane Law School, and then served 4 years as a JAG officer in the United States Navy.

Malcolm Meyer practiced law over 30 years, taught and mentored students as an adjunct professor, and he became a leading expert in his field, literally writing the book on real estate transaction law in Louisiana, the widely read and referenced "Malcolm's Manual on Louisiana Real Estate."

Malcolm has used his vast knowledge and expertise not only to better his colleagues and his profession, but to help the disadvantaged in his community. Most notably, following the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, Malcolm spent countless hours of pro bono work protecting the property and belongings of the most vulnerable in his State.

He has been recognized over the years for his outstanding volunteer service by organizations, including Louisiana Appleseed Foundation, Louisiana Land Title Association, and the prestigious George Herbert Walker Bush's Points of Light.

On December 29, Malcolm was named the recipient of the 2021 Louisiana Land Title Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

Strong countries and vibrant communities, Mr. Speaker, are not established merely because of good laws but because of good men whose hearts are devoted to the sum of all laws: Love thy neighbor as thyself.

That is Malcolm Meyer to his core, and I know that unequivocally, Mr. Speaker, because he is my father-in-law. I am so proud of him, and I want to congratulate Big Mouse and send our best. We love Big Mouse, and it is a well-deserved recognition.

RECOGNIZING DON MCBEATH

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding west Texan, a great partner in delivering rural healthcare solutions, and a dear friend, Don McBeath.

Don is retiring from his role as director of government relations for the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals, what we refer to as TORCH, where he has been a champion for over 150 rural hospitals since 2007.

Prior to his time with TORCH, Don blazed the trail in telehealth by serv-

ing as the director of telemedicine and rural health at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Before that, he served as a judge and several years in the DA's office.

I wish Don and Beverly all the best as they move into the next chapter of their lives. I thank Don for his friendship and his tremendous contributions to rural west Texas.

CONGRATULATING CASH PATTEN AND BERKLEY WATERS

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, rodeo is not just a sport; it is a way of life and a heritage in the Lone Star State. I am pleased to see this time-honored tradition is being kept alive by the next generation of Texans.

I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of two outstanding west Texans, 9-year-old Berkley Waters of Lubbock and 12-year-old Cash Patten of New Home. Berkley and Cash, two great cowboy names, recently competed in the barrel racing finals in the Junior World Finals rodeo in Las Vegas.

West Texans are known for being hardworking, tough, and undeterred. Cash and Berkley have these qualities, Mr. Speaker, in spades. Their commitment to these virtues and their craft has allowed them to perform at the highest level and on the biggest stage in their sport.

I want to congratulate Berkley and Cash for all their hard work and what they have been able to accomplish at a young age.

God bless America and go west Texas.

HONORING SENATOR HARRY REID

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Nevada's longest-serving Senator, Harry Reid, who passed away on December 28, with his beloved children: Lana, Key, Josh, Leif, and Rory; and his devoted wife of 62 years, Landra, by his side. My condolences and prayers are with them all and with the countless people whose lives he has changed, his friends, staff, and all of those in the great State of Nevada.

This tribute could be about Senator Reid being the most consequential Senate majority leader in modern history. It could also be about how Senator Reid was the true embodiment of what it meant to be battle born, a boxer as a young man who never backed down from a good fight for the least among us.

It could be about the story of his American Dream, rising out of severe poverty in Searchlight, Nevada; hitchhiking 40 miles to school; working as a Capitol Police Officer to put himself through law school, to becoming one of the most powerful political leaders of our time.

It could also be about his legislative accomplishments, such as the Affordable Care Act, which gave millions of